

The McGill Daily

Volume 79, Number 82

Wednesday, March 14, 1990



FEMINIST MANIFESTO

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FEMINIST MANIFESTO

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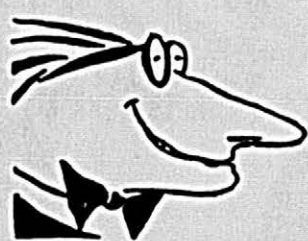
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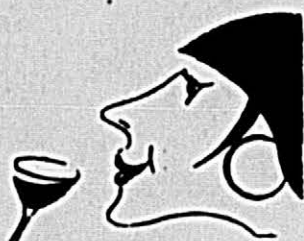
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contributors

Jennifer August
Karen Valihora
Tamsin Douglas
Elizabeth Littlejohn
Muriel Castillo
Margie Borschke
Andrea Worrell
Dasi Moscovitch
Anick Goulet
Stephanie Conway
Katrina Cizek
Miriam Korn
Lawrence Harris
Tina Girardi
Lydia Allen

Editorial Offices

3480 McTavish, room B-03
Montréal, Québec H3A 1X9
telephone (514) 398-6784

co-ordinating editor
Susana Bejar
co-ordinating news editor
Linda Gyulai
news editors
Carl P. Wilson III
Joyce Lombardi
layout and design co-ordinators
Heather MacKay
Eric Léonard
CUP editor
Dave McCullough

daily français
Philippe Archambault
Alan Bowman
photo editor
Dennis Sagwitz
Gilles Pesant
features editor
Alex Roslin
supplement editor
Jennifer Cressey
science editor
Alice Wei

Business and Advertising Office

3480 McTavish, room B-17
Montréal, Québec H3A 1X9

business managers

Brigitte Elie
Marian Schrier
telephone (514) 398-6790

advertising managers

Caroline Elie
Boris Shedov
telephone (514) 398-6791

advertising layout and design

Mike Sportza
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Racism divides Québec women

by Stephanie Conway

Accusations of racism have undermined the solidarity of the Québec women's movement after a prominent Québec feminist made some controversial remarks about immigrant women in the province.

Last April, a Radio-Canada programme called *Disparaître*, mediated by former Parti Québécois cabinet minister Lise Payette, discussed whether immigration were a viable solution to Québec's low birth rate.

According to the coordinator of the Immigrant Women's Collective, Auora Bizzarri, Payette took the opportunity to air her view that non-European immigrants are a threat to Québec culture.

"Such comments, which present us as enemies of Québec society, will only encourage racism," said Bizzarri.

According to Bizzarri, Payette's views were biased and ignored the positive aspects of immigration in Québec. "It's not fair to judge immigrants without considering our will and our effort to integrate into Québec society," she said.

In response to Payette's comments, the Collective withdrew its membership from Femmes en tête, an umbrella organization established to celebrate the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage in Québec.

According to Bizzarri, Payette expressed concern during the programme about immigrants not learning French. Only 20-25 per cent of immigrants learn to speak French upon arrival in Québec largely due to financial constraints. "Immigrants are here for economic as well as humanitarian reasons. It's good for the economy. But the immigrant labour market is not just French. Immigrants will speak the language of the boss," said Bizzarri.

Payette also cited several examples of immigrant violence in other countries to demonstrate what she claimed could happen in Québec with increased immigration.

Said Bizzarri, "There are a few nostalgic nationalists who talk about immigrants like they are experts. All they want is a scapegoat."

Québec society is no longer only white and francophone. "The Québec of today, whether Payette likes it or not, is made of different kinds of people with different coloured skins — all of us together are making Québec culture," said Bizzarri.

Feminism and immigrants.

Payette ignored the relationship between feminism and immigrant interests, according to Bizzarri. "If in your heart you understand the fight of women who want to be equal to men, why can't you understand why immigrant women want to be the same as everyone else? Why should we shut up?"

"Femmes en tête does not represent all of Québec even if many women support its decisions," she

added. "We have nothing against Payette personally, it is just a matter of principle. If we want to do something together, we are women just like everyone else. This is not a fight between feminists and immigrants."

The Collective's decision to resign from Femmes en tête was supported by several groups including Le Conseil de communauté culturelle et d'immigration du Québec and by feminist activist Madeline Pavend.

"I think there will be a new solidarity, a real collaboration be-

tween people based on respect. If a woman is exploited, her colour does not matter. It's the same fight," said Bizzarri.

Since the airing of *Disparaître* last year and the subsequent withdrawal of the Collective from Femmes en tête, Payette has made no formal apology or rescinded her comments. In a *Fifth Estate* profile on Payette which aired February 27, Payette was asked if she had any regrets about *Disparaître*. According to Bizzarri, Payette responded with a smile, "Not at all — I'm glad I made it."



Les Québécoises luttent pour l'accès politique

Anick Goulet

Les femmes sont de plus en plus nombreuses sur la scène politique. Mais leur représentativité augmente à un rythme beaucoup moins rapide qu'on pourrait le croire. En fait, son taux de croissance plafonne à 4 p. cent par année. À ce rythme, l'égalité numérique entre hommes et femmes ne sera atteinte qu'en 2022.

Malgré cette progression lente, plusieurs barrières qui freinaient traditionnellement l'ambition des femmes sont en voie d'être éliminées.

Des études réalisées au cours des années 80 par le Conseil du statut de la femme démontrent clairement que les femmes candidates à des élections ont maintenant un taux de succès aussi élevé que leurs homologues masculins. « Autrefois, on envoyait les femmes dans les comités perdus d'avance », remarque Mme Lucie Desrochers, agente de recherche au Conseil.

Présentement, 23 femmes siègent à l'Assemblée nationale, ce qui représente 18,4 p. cent des députés provinciaux. Six d'entre elles sont ministres, sur un total de trente postes ministériels. À la Chambre des communes, le taux de représentativité féminin est un peu plus faible. Les femmes élues constituent 13,2 p. cent des représentants fédéraux. De ce nombre, 17,5 p. cent sont des députées québécoises.

Mme Anne-Marie Gingras, auteure du rapport *Sexes et militantisme*, publié l'année dernière aux

Éditions CIDHICA, croit que la situation des femmes s'améliore « lentement mais sûrement ». De nombreux préjugés, de la part des personnes âgées par exemple, tendent à disparaître.

Selon Mme Gingras, la proportion de femmes en politique est cruciale. « Lorsque leur nombre est restreint, on s'attarde davantage aux fautes individuelles et on les attribue aux femmes en général. Plus les femmes seront nombreuses, plus on regardera la personne en tant que telle indépendamment de son sexe. »

Bien que la condition des femmes soit plus satisfaisante qu'il y a quelques décennies, certains obstacles demeurent. Entre autres facteurs, Mme Gingras souligne les réseaux de contacts limités, les stéréotypes toujours présents ainsi que la situation économique qui contraignent encore les femmes dans leur carrière politique.

À l'époque où elle rédigeait le rapport avec deux de ses collègues, Mmes Evelyn Tardy et Chantale Maillet, Anne-Marie Gingras approchait les partis politiques et le gouvernement pour qu'ils adoptent des mesures incitatives en vue d'augmenter le nombre de femmes en politique. Selon elle, « ils ne veulent rien savoir ».

Mme Gingras donne la Norvège et de la Suède comme modèles à suivre. Les conditions régissant le processus des mises en candidature exigent que 40 p. cent des candidats soit des femmes et 40 p. cent des hommes. Le 20 p. cent restant

constitue une marge de manœuvre allouée à l'un ou l'autre des deux sexes.

À défaut d'établir de pareils quotas, ces femmes aimeraient que les gouvernements fédéral et provincial dégagent des fonds spéciaux pour aplanir les difficultés sociales et financières propre à la condition féminine.

Anna-Laura Javicoli, candidate péquiste aux dernières élections provinciales dans le comté de Lafontaine, croit qu'il y a de moins en moins de discrimination à l'égard des femmes en politique, tant de la part de la population en général que des leurs collègues masculins. Elle explique néanmoins son échec par la présence d'une grande communauté italienne dans le comté Lafontaine pour qui « l'homme porte encore le pantalon ».

Lucille Marsolais, du groupe des Femmes regroupées pour l'accès aux pouvoirs politique et économique (FRAPPE), indique une ouverture plus grande chez les électeurs. « La réticence de la population face aux femmes en politique semble disparaître progressivement », se réjouit-elle.

Même si la représentativité des femmes en politique n'a pas encore atteint le 50 p. cent souhaité, les obstacles de nature purement sexistes sont moins considérables qu'il y a 20 ans. Selon Mme Charlotte Thibault, secrétaire du Conseil d'administration de la Fédération des femmes du Québec, « on réalise enfin que le meilleur homme peut être une femme ».

No shelter from budget cuts

by Dasi Moscovitch

In the recent federal budget the government cut \$1.6 million from all groups receiving funding in the Secretary of State women's program. In Québec alone this affects 39 women's centres.

The cuts total \$340 000 for Québec — \$85 000 less per women's centre.

"It seems as though we are really moving backwards, government funding is regressing to what it was a few years ago. They are really pulling the rug out from under us," said Elizabeth Harper, a member of the Coalition of Women's Shelters.

The money that the government gives to shelters for battered women covers less than 49 per cent of their costs, according to a study done by Ruth Rose in 1986. New studies may indicate this figure to be as low as 25 per cent.

The government would rather funnel money into institutionalized services than fund alternative community groups. When a battered woman contacts the police, they now give her name and phone number to the local CLSC. "This disrespects the expertise of the women's shelters, and dilutes the quality of services rendered," said Linda Lee Ross, a shelter worker, adding women may be apprehensive about reporting an incident of violence if they know their names will be on file at a CLSC.

The shelters provide a support network for women. The recent cuts show the Mulroney government pulling out of their commitment.

"The perception is that women's movements are climbing the ladder of success, but the reality is that there are more women living on welfare and in poverty than ever before," said Harper.

Women's centres and shelters are a place where women can get together and talk, discover commonalities, and empower themselves.

According to Harper women's shelters are the safest and most empowering place for victims of conjugal violence, "the home which was so damaging to them is now serving to empower them," she said.

"The family policies that have come out are really regressive. The government wants to gain from the [institutional] system that already exists," said Ross.

The Coalition of Women's Shelters in Québec are slashing their already shoestring budgets. Annual training programs for counsellors have already been cut.

"Shelters are severely underfunded. Therefore, they need to expend a lot of energy raising funds. Each worker ends up carrying the load of three workers, which often leads to burnout," said Harper.

Women shake fists at sky

by Dasi Moscovitch

Innu women's latest battle to get Nato off ancestral territory, theirs for the last 9000 years, was waged International Women's Day in front of the St. Hubert military base.

The low-level supersonic test-flying already disrupts life in Nitassinan, located in the Québec-Labrador peninsula. The Innu would lose most of their land if the Canadian government's plans for a full NATO military base there go ahead—the Canadian government is negotiating with NATO to extend the Goose Bay area into a full military base.

Military presence has serious repercussions for the community at large, and women in particular. Sexual abuse, prostitution and sexual harassment are on the increase.

A panel discussion about the demilitarization of Nitassinan was held at McGill March 7.

"The women's movement has become highly politicized. Women in the community realize the government is making decisions about their daily lives, and they are taking action," said Michelle Rouleau of the Native Women's Association.

Following the panel discussion, an Action was held at the St. Hubert military air force base. The demonstration was a show of solidarity by Québec women to the Innu women's cause.

"All they want to do is live

peacefully, living in their own way, and they cannot even do that in Canada," said Charlotte Debbane of Women Opposing Militarism in Nitassinan (WOMIN).

The action was a blatant way of telling the government that we do not agree with their actions.

"The federal government is telling other governments how to behave, how they should be treating their minorities, yet in their own backyard this is how they treat native people," said Rouleau.

Military police held off the women marchers with brutal force at the action. One marcher said she heard the only female military police officer say, "it was no wonder that women are marching, after all they have nothing better to do—only men work."

She obviously was not celebrating International Women's Day.

The women were not able to enter the base, but managed to block road traffic. The march attracted wide-ranging media attention.

The Innu people, hunters and nomads, depend on the land to continue their way of life.

According to Debbane, "Canadians should remember that all of us were from immigrant families. Our oldest families are approximately 300 years old. Native people have lived here for thousands of years. When you live in someone's house you pay the rent, you do not steal their possessions."



Women protest militarization of Nitassinan.

Frats sorry for sexist poster

by Katerina Cizek

The Alpha Delta Phi fraternity has officially apologized for a poster campus feminists call sexist.

"It was an unilateral action," said John Cape, President of Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity, in a letter to the *Daily*, apologizing for the circulation of the "Immaculate Consumption" poster around campus last week.

The poster, advertising a party, depicts a cartoon of Adam and Eve standing below the Tree of Knowledge. A figure, half-snake, half-man wearing the fraternity's T-shirt, is offering Eve a bottle of beer. Text above the figure reads "Just say Yes."

According to Cape, the idea for the poster was borrowed from a similar T-shirt reading "It's not immoral, it's for charity."

The T-shirt was printed a year and a half ago, and "there's still a big pile of them," said Cape. "But we'll put a lid on them for a while, and decide what to do with them."

No punitive action will be taken against the fraternity member responsible for last week's posters. "Like any organisation, we can't be responsible for all our members," Cape said, "so the best thing we can do is ensure this won't happen again."

Last week, Alpha Delta Phi issued a letter of apology to the Coalition Against Sexual Assault,

asking the woman's group to meet with the fraternity to discuss women's issues.

Shelley Kreiger from the Coalition said, "I'm glad that Alpha Delta Phi recognized the need for issuing an apology, but women's groups shouldn't be expected to always act as watch-dogs. Everyone should take responsibility for ensuring women are portrayed positively themselves."

"If Alpha Delta Phi can't even check themselves internally, to make sure individual members don't act on the part of the organization as a whole, what's the point of consulting with a women's group?"

Making women's work count

by Margie Borschke

A woman's work is never done. It's also seldom paid for. Women perform two-thirds of the world's work, yet they receive only 10 per cent of the world's income and control only one per cent of the world's assets. This incongruity results because a large proportion of women's work is unpaid.

This unpaid labour is not counted in the Gross National Product of any nation, although women's unpaid labour may produce as much as 50 per cent of a country's GNP. Unpaid work goes unrecognized. If women lack economic status, they simply lack status, and the refusal to acknowledge women's work becomes a refusal to acknowledge women.

In 1985 at the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women in Nairobi, it was agreed that, women's labour, both paid and unpaid, should be accounted for in the GNP of every nation. "Concrete steps should be taken to quantify the unremunerated contribution of women to agriculture, food production,

reproduction and household activities," said the report.

The Wages for Housework campaign can be held largely responsible for the Nairobi victory. Founded in 1975 to unite women's movements across national, racial, and class divisions, the Wages for Housework campaign strives for countries to acknowledge the UN promise and grant a wage for housework.

Selma James, the founder of the organization, gave three lectures in Montréal last week and outlined the assumptions and strategies of the movement.

The Wages for Housework campaign presumes that all women do housework regardless of their employment status. This work is the foundation of any kind of economic organization. Women, through housework and childcare, are almost solely responsible for reproducing the labour force.

James cautions against romanticizing housework, a trend almost as dangerous as ignoring it.

Nelson Mandela said after his release that "You (the Black women of South Africa) are the rockhard

foundation of our struggle." While James agreed with Mandela's sentiment, she warned, "There's a danger with a quotation like this that there would be some glorification of women's work."

"You are all angels, they say. No, we're not angels. We don't need any compliments that augment our status of angels because angel means poor and overworked!"

Women's unpaid labour, James pointed out, is not restricted to washing dishes and raising kids. Women in developing countries are often responsible for agriculture and herding. Less noticed, James added, is the emotional support women are expected to provide men and children.

"Women are not counted, but they are counted on," she said, repeating a Wages for Housework slogan.

The work of caretakers — mothers, nurses or social workers — is not valued as much as destructive activities such as building bombs.

"According to the International Labour Organization a soldier is a worker... but a mother is not. So, if

you are able to take life you're definitely productive but if you give it there's a problem," said James.

This critique of what our society considers valuable, leads to a practical solution about where the money is to come from — military budgets.

"Ultimately we want wages for housework not only because our work is unwaged, not only because we need the autonomy that a wage will give us but because we don't want (the military establishment) to have that money. Our lives depend on having (the money) in our own good hands."

A united front?

Despite the campaign's global focus, disputes over its aims and objectives have developed between middle class and working class feminists.

Mainstream feminists criticize the campaign for its lack of practical detail, and its Marxist leanings. Paying women for housework, they argue, only reinforces gender roles, and in effect, pays women to stay in

their places.

As all working women know, liberation from the home does not entail liberation from the housework. In fact, most working women face an exhausting double day which also restricts their mobility in the workplace. In a study done by Arlie Hochschild it is estimated that women's extra work adds up to one extra month of 24 hour days per year.

The Wages for Housework Campaign argues that women can only begin to challenge gender roles once they have the economic autonomy to do so. Without money it is impossible to refuse to do housework, said James. Once women have economic clout in the home, then "men will do their part or they'll have to leave."

"Perhaps a lot of (men), will be willing to do the work if there is money attached to it," she added.

Yet many women cannot wait for (mostly male) legislators to deem their work necessary by giving them a wage. Although James' arguments are theoretically sound, many crucial practical details are still left unresolved.

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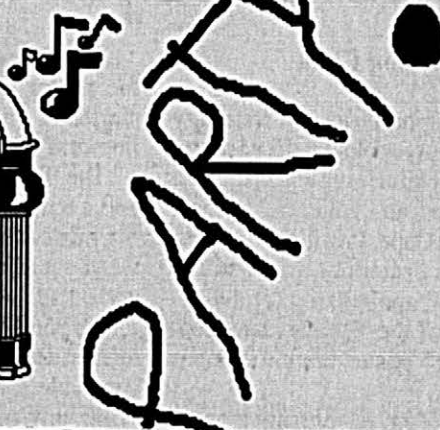
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Daily news brief

A committee to examine the condition of women on Québec university campuses has been reestablished to respond to current issues.

The province-wide Comité de concertation MESS Université en condition féminine was established in the early 1980s with a mandate to develop a report on all aspects of women on campuses, including students, faculty and employees. According to McGill's delegate to the Committee, Associate Dean of Students Lynn Butler-Kisber, "There was a general agreement that the Committee was a worthwhile effort to continue."

The Committee is exploring themes like teaching and research, sexual harassment, promotion, sports and recreation, childcare and recruitment.

The themes are intentionally general since they vary among the universities.

According to Butler-Kisber, the Committee deals with women across the university with the underlying notion that all women's issues are connected.

The Committee's studies are used to make recommendations to university vice-principals or rectors and, if necessary, the government.

-Stephanie Conway

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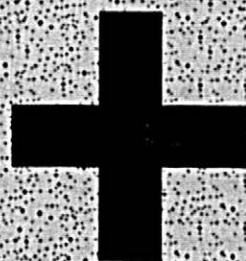


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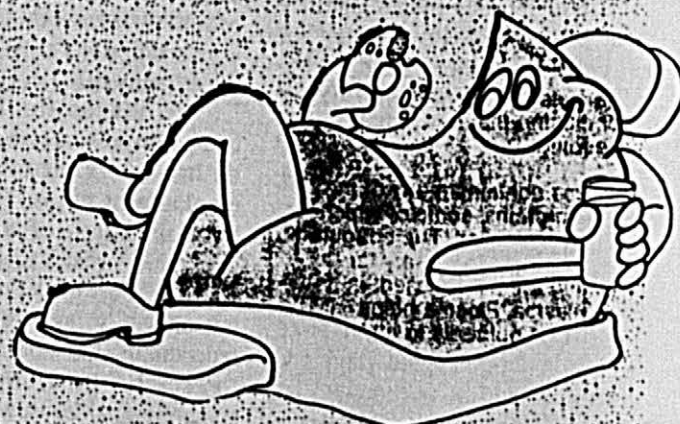
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Neo Malthusians: Controlling the wombs of African mothers

Two weeks ago, headlines shrieked "Within 40 years the population of the earth will double." The smaller print blamed developing nations, "U.S. urges Third World to curb population." The hysteria caps one of the most pervasive and durable myths in global politics: the world is dangerously overpopulated and it's brown people's fault.

JOYCE LOMBARDI

Government, church, international aid and family planning officials are fighting for the control of wombs in "overpopulated" countries, and sub-Saharan Africa is becoming the latest population-crusading hot spot. Convinced Africans are breeding themselves into extinction, the Population Establishment is directing its energy at reducing the children of African mothers. Whether these global meddlers advocate forced sterilization or strict birth limits — or wider family planning that includes health, education, and economic development, women's reproductive freedom is denied.

Population myth below the Sahara

The World Bank — one of the most powerful advocates of population control — said in November that Africa had the highest fertility rate in the world, will support 500 million people by 1990 and double that by 2010. The World Bank fails to mention that Africa has been systematically de-populated. Only since the beginning of the century has Africa begun to rebuild a population largely demolished by the slave trade, colonial exploitation and European disease. Nor do its statistics mention the distribution of Africa's population. Average density is 16 people per square kilometre — far greater than Canada.

Poverty is the problem in Africa, not population.

Pointing to the fact that sub-Saharan Africa's population rose by three per cent last year while its per capita GNP dropped one percent, World Bank officials conclude increased population causes poverty. Demographics show just the opposite; increased poverty causes an increase in population. The World Bank has the argument all wrong.

High infant mortality rates, due to disease and poverty, drive up birth rates. Colonial destruction of farming means families are no longer self-sustaining, and need more and more children as labourers and old age security. The subversion of feminine roles means that women's status is confined to her reproductive role, and mothers of many children gain more respect than mothers of a few.

"High birth rates are often a distress signal that people's survival is endangered," says population researcher Linda Hartmann in *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*.

"Neo-Malthusians are saying 'the poor were born to their lot, and the only way out is to stop being born'," says Hartmann. Named after 18th century British economist Thomas Malthus, who thought the only cure for poverty was disease or death, Malthusian alarmists simply blame the victims. Developed countries overlook their own patterns of con-

sumption and political interference as causes of Africa's increase in population and poverty.

"Poverty is not the problem in the Third World, it's wealth," said Bonnie Johnston, President of the Canadian Planned Parenthood Confederation. "No one ever admits that many of the problems, including population, have been created by our interference."

"Unfortunately, we're in the Third World now, though we have no right to be there, and the least we can do is try to make sure things don't get any worse."

Malthusians and deep ecologists argue overpopulation causes environmental depletion. "As more and more people in poverty areas press upon limited natural resources in

rural areas, they begin to deplete the stock of natural resources," states the World Bank's 1989 Development Report, flagrantly ignoring the fact that industrialized countries consume 80 per cent of the world's resources.

Population control backfire

Population control programs employ forced sterilisation, government-imposed birth limits and cash "disincentives" as coercion. Although such techniques haven't been employed as widely in Africa as in Asia, the alarming focus on the fertility rate of sub-Saharan Africa means it's in line for the same treatment.

The African Development Bank is hopping on the Population Control bandwagon. Vice President P.T. Seya announced "fertility reduction" as one of the bank's primary goals last December.

Seya's policies include women's health and education, but his guidelines are as top-heavy as those of the World Bank's five-step population policy, outlined in its 1984 World Report. Both stress the role of "senior officials" in population policy. Both disdain countries whose population policy is limited to family planning. Treating the continent as a huge breeding factory, Seya's plan ignores the fact that individual countries have different population needs. It also ignores the fact that population control programs rarely work.

Instead, Seya praises the 14 countries with hard-line population policies, leaving the four countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) who have only family planning policies at the bottom of the list. Beneath these are the five countries who have pro-natalist governments (Chad, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau).

Pregnant Politics

Pro-natalists declare a stronger population is a stronger nation. Suspicious of the motives of Western nations in limiting their births, they call population programs racist genocide and ban contraceptives. In effect, the ban forces women to have babies to spite of the west, not because they want children.

Kenya, the first African country to launch a population control program (in 1967), has one of the highest birthrates in the world. Convinced of the need to lower birth rates, the Kenyan government imported the IUD

schoolchildren was laced with a contraceptive chemical. Kids stopped drinking the milk. The rumour was spread by Christian groups trying to subvert the family planning strategy.

In fact, religious groups have sabotaged the reproductive freedom of women as much, if not more than the Malthusians.

Papists vs Malthusians

According to Population Crisis Committee officials in Washington, D.C. the Church has done its best to subvert the population establishment.

"A lot of misinformation is circulating about population control, and much of it is circulated by the Catholic church," said Committee VP Sharon Camp. "These people are opposed to sex and are doing their best to smudge our efforts."

The influence of the Catholic church is still powerful in West African francophone countries. (While the northern provinces of many of these countries are Muslim, the southern are Christian.)

"One of the things colonialism did was wipe out traditional birth-spacing and family planning traditions," said Camp.

Abortion holds a delicate position in the Population Establishment policy. While they advocate lowering birth rates by virtually any means necessary, almost none of them dare battle powerful U.S. anti-abortionists.

The biggest name in the Population Establishment is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). With a population budget of \$224 billion, USAID funds almost half the population control programs in developing countries. Eight years of Reagan administration have sabotaged the concept of family planning and reproductive choice.

In 1984, Reagan announced that international organisations that even mentioned abortions would not receive funding.

"The Reagan administration had a chilling effect on abortion. Abortion was moving quietly towards legalization in the medical communities of Africa until 1984," said Camp.

Family planning the solution?

Aid agencies are beginning to favour policies integrating maternal health, and women's economic development — believing development is the best contraceptive.

While World Bank President Barber Conable boasts over one-fifth of its development projects will address women's needs in 1990, this doesn't mean reproductive choice will fare any better in family planning strategies. Malthusian aid agencies develop guidelines for countries that specifically deny women a choice.

Most aid agencies favour sterilization or injectable hormones which require little user control and even less clinic monitoring. Depo-provera is widely used, even though it is not legal in the U.S. Even more controversial is Nor-Plant — time release hormone capsules inserted into the arm and lasting up to five years. Because of AIDS, condoms are becoming the contraceptive of choice.

But, according to Camp, "we can't make the decisions about what women should use. We should provide every single contraceptive available, along with complete information, and let women choose for themselves."



and foreign advisors. With little popular support for either, the programme flopped. Viva, a Kenyan woman's magazine, noted paltry counselling or follow-up for the IUD's targetted women, frightened by unexplained side-effects, simply dropped out of the programs.

Trouble was exacerbated by friction between village women and middle-class health care workers. "She is so painted, everyone just stares at her. What does she know? People see the family with ten children is well off, while the one without any child is suffering," reported Viva about the visit of a health care worker.

Kenya's program suffered rumours in the central highlands that free milk distributed to



Palestinian feminism and nationalism: an uneasy mix

"Soldiers don't discriminate," says Nisreen Haram, a co-ordinator of the McGill Palestinian Solidarity Committee, whose parents fled Israeli raids in 1948. "They shoot at anything that walks or throws stones."

By November, the death toll for Palestinian women was at 102. Even more have had spontaneous abortions from tear gas, beatings and stress while in detention.

Women are central in Palestinian society's highly-organized effort to sustain itself in the face of Israeli occupation. The social revolution occurred on the backs of women's charity groups, literacy programs, health clinics, orphanages and skills-training centres. "Had it been only a political revolt," says Shahak of the Intifada, "it would by now have collapsed."

Palestinian society has moved underground in response to the Israeli army's "iron fist" military rule. Israeli army commanders wield dictatorial power over the everyday lives of Palestinians, controlling activity as trivial as backyard tree-planting. Much of social life now operates underground, on the basis of the social infrastructure women operated before the uprising — a decentralized network of neighbourhood committees, education and health organizations, students' groups and trade unions.

FISTS COME TUMBLING DOWN

During the Intifada, the army demolished the homes of 3000 people — often destroying others nearby — because a resident "threw stones." 50 000 Palestinian men and women have been jailed and 700 shot by the army. Schools are regularly closed for months on end; books are banned, hundreds of activists have been deported.

The Palestinian economy is a favourite target of the military governors. Palestinian land is regularly expropriated for use by Jewish settlers, 70 000 of whom now control over one-third of the Occupied Territories. Since the territories provide one-third of Israel's water supply, water and other resources are strictly controlled by the army. Palestinians also have to pay Israeli taxes, in effect financing their own occupation. Store-closings and curfews are frequently imposed by the Israeli army to punish entire communities for "unruliness."

Palestinians responded to Israeli restrictions on farming and industry by re-creating the entire economy underground. Clandestine communal projects organizing agriculture, health services and basement clothes-making enable Palestinians to maintain a

Ecuadorian women launch campaign against machismo

"Basta de violencia contra la mujer!" screams a flyer circulated last fall by an Ecuadorian women's committee as it launched a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness about brutality against women.

The committee, called the Unete al Comité por la No Violencia a la Mujer and based in Quito, Ecuador, has declared 1990 the year of Preventing Violence Against Women.

Muriel Castillo

Launched November 25, the date declared International Violence against Women Awareness Day by the Feminist Latin American and Caribbean conference, the campaign runs until December 10, 1990, which is Human Rights Day.

Jacqueline Perez, an Ecuadorian activist who helped organize the campaign, joined the solidarity movement out of outrage at the violence against women in her country. "I was constantly fearing my life because of the things that were going on around me," she said. Perez recounted stories of women in her neighbourhood who had been beaten to death by their boyfriends or husbands. She told of one man who locked his wife up during the day, returning at night to physically abuse her, eventually killing her.

Awareness of male violence became the glue that unified the fledgling Ecuadorian women's movements which began forming in the early '80s. According to Perez, women's low self-image constrained the early feminist groups, preventing them from gaining momentum. It wasn't until the mid '80s that women became unified.

"The movements found a common ground and this was violence," Perez said. In 1985,

she joined the committee to initiate the campaign of Violence against Women.

The cult of machismo is not only engrained in the attitudes of Ecuadorian men, but also enshrined in the constitution. By Ecuadorian law, a husband or any blood relative up to the fourth cousin has the right to beat a woman. A man does not even spend a night in jail after killing his wife. This violence is not only accepted as commonplace but is sanctioned by law.

Due to pressure from the Unete Comité, the Ecuadorian Congress set up a commission last year to focus on family issues. The commission includes a sub-committee of women lawyers who are reforming various sections of the constitution, including the present death penalty.

Where violence against women is not explicit in the lawbooks, it is improvised by law enforcers. The most vivid example of police brutality is the story of a pregnant 30-year-old woman who was tortured by the police in her own home. The beatings induced an abortion. To stop the flow of blood, the woman was hung by her ankles. She was then hung by her thumbs, and was sexually abused while her young son watched. Perez

cited a dozen cases of women and young girls who have been raped, beaten to death and degraded in police custody. "We were overwhelmed with accounts of brutality," she said.

The Unete Comité has also undertaken a study on the status of women in Ecuador. Among other things, the group found that eight out of ten women in the city of Guayaquil receive treatment for physical and psychological abuse, and that one out of four girls is sexually abused before her 16th birthday.

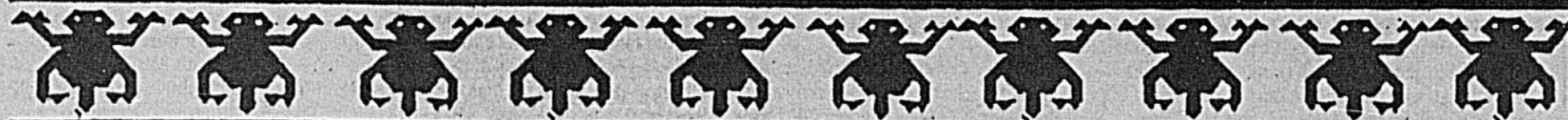
The cult of machismo would have less power if women had a higher economic status. But women make up the highest percentage of the unemployed and menial labourers in Ecuador. Many are forced into prostitution at a young age — 86 per cent of prostitutes are 10 to 15 years old. In addition, women's health care is abysmal — 64 per cent of mothers suffer from chronic malnourishment.

The Unete Comité is currently working with the Social Ministry and featuring educational clips on violence against women during regular television hours, in an effort to bring men and women together to fight for equality and an end to violence.

If you are interested in receiving more information on this movement in Ecuador write to: Unete al Comité Por la No Violencia a la Mujer/9 de Octubre 1540 y Orellano/Quito, Ecuador/S.A.

Or call Jacqueline Perez who is now living in Montréal at 324-8743.

This Saturday the Ecuadorian society will be holding a dance in honour of Latin American women. There will be a number of female musicians performing. The cost is \$3 and the event will be held at 7507 Boul St. Laurent from 8 pm to 3 am.



For people outside Palestine, "Intifada" usually means rubber bullets and stones. But the most striking thing about the two-year uprising against 20 years of Israeli occupation is its remarkable effect on Palestinian society.

Traditional hierarchies of ruling village elders have been overturned in the villages. Dynamic "popular committees" of elected youths now co-ordinate the Intifada, as well as social life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Women have also created a prominent place for themselves over the course of the uprising, challenging both Palestinian tradition and the Israeli army's violence. Well-known Jewish peace activist Israel Shahak calls it "a complete social revolution."

Alex Roslin

boycott on Israeli products, costing Israel about a billion in revenue over the last two years.

"Women have initiated the organization of families for the Intifada, and the establishment of neighbourhood committees, organizing themselves on a grassroots level," Bir Zeit university sociology professor Eileen Kattab recently told *Palestinian Focus*. "From the woman's traditional role as producer in the domestic economy came the idea of producing collectively."

THE WAR ON WOMEN

"In the Occupied Territories," Haram says, "the woman is vulnerable not only as a Palestinian, but as a woman."

Palestinians have joined Jewish and international women's groups to protest Israeli policies. Recent polls report 80 per cent of Israeli Jewish women think their government should enter direct peace talks with the PLO, twice the number of men.

Every week for nearly two years, the Jewish "Women in Black" has demonstrated outside Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir's house, protesting the administrative detention of 10 000 Palestinians without trial in the Ansar 3 internment camp in the Negev Desert. The group also protests the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the militarization of Israeli society; war production involves one-half of Israel's economy, twice the American outlay.

On International Women's Day last week, women's groups across the world held vigils in solidarity with "Women in Black" and the Israeli peace movement.

In January, Hagit Shlonsky, of the Tel Aviv-based Women's Organization for Political Prisoners, reported a dramatic increase in hostilities directed at women by the Israeli army. "The authorities have conducted physical and psychological warfare specifically directed at the growing numbers of Palestinian women activists," Shlonsky told *Zeta* magazine.

Thousands have gone to jail, where torture and sexual abuse of women is common. Demonstrations in 22 North American cities last August protested the treatment of detained women, many held without charges, often because their children were seen throw-

ing stones at Israeli soldiers.

One Palestinian told *Zeta*, "The soldiers threaten us with rapes, beatings, and kidnappings to get us to talk. When we don't talk, they often carry out the threats. Often mothers, wives and daughters are taken away as a method of luring the men out of hiding."

"Last month, they came for my son in the night. When they didn't find him, a soldier put a gun to my infant's head, saying, 'Talk or I'll kill him.' The following day, my pregnancy ended."

The Israeli army's attitudes toward women are increasingly informed by the hard-line sexism of the religious right-wing. Israel Shahak talks in current issue of *Zeta* about an Israeli soldier who voted in the 1984 parliamentary elections for Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League. (Kahane supports a policy of mass "transfer" of Arabs from Israeli-occupied land and held a parliamentary seat until his political party was banned last winter for being too fascist).

But Shahak's soldier supported Kahane for another reason — "because Kahane will bring the women to their proper obedience," the soldier said. He eventually took a 17-year-old Hassidic Jew by arranged marriage. "Although I am from Morocco and they gave me a girl from Iraq," Shahak quoted the soldier as saying, "I prefer her." According to Shahak, Israel has seen a marked shift to support for the religious right over the last decade, with ominous implications for both Jewish and Palestinian women straight out of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

DIRECTIONS FOR FEMINIST STRUGGLE

Women's increasingly active participation in social life brings conflict with traditional values into the open, says Haram. "There is often a concern for the, so to speak, reputation of a woman who goes out and is exposed to other people within Palestinian society, as well as to Israeli soldiers."

The Palestinian women's movement



Women in the Intifada throw stones.

hasn't focused on women as such, but has as its priority the national struggle. As a result, the development of a feminist consciousness has been inhibited. "With Israel as the major enemy and the entire political discourse fed by this enemy, it's difficult to say men should also be an enemy," Haram says.

"This environment really restricts the full investigation of gender roles. A lot of Palestinian men find an easy counter-attack by claiming feminism represents Western, colonial values and that 'our system has its own system of equality'."

Israeli soldiers exploit the tension by spreading rumours to discredit a woman's reputation, which is simpler than detaining her. "A repeated technique used in interrogating Palestinian men is threatening to abuse their sisters as a way of getting information," Haram says.

In the long run, she says, continuing subordination of the women's struggle to the national struggle will have dangerous consequences.

Women in Algeria, though highly active in the liberation movement against France in the 1960s, found themselves back in the kitchen and bedroom soon after Algeria gained independence. This was because their participation in the struggle was merely an extension of traditional roles, says Haram.

"The Intifada has seen real changes among women — they are extremely involved in the struggle. But their involvement is still in the area of domestic roles. There is the situation where women go to a demonstration only after giving the children to a grandmother."

The Women's Organization for Political Prisoners is circulating a list of 38 female political prisoners at Hasharon Prison and three other detention centres, jailed without trial. They face grotesque health conditions, violent interrogations, sexual assault and a lack of water, food and protection from the cold.

International protests are often effective in easing conditions of such prisoners and even in obtaining their release. Mail protest letters to:

Military Commander of Central Region
Yitzhak Mordechi
PO Box 10482
Beit El
West Bank

For more information write to:
Human Rights Rapid Response Network
PO Box 20854
Tompkins Square Station
New York City, NY
10009

Men still speak of women as "the mother of the martyr" and "supporter of men." They are useful for the national struggle, says Haram, but these roles will not necessarily transfer into concrete political gains in a future Palestinian state.

It's important to balance the national liberation effort with social reform, says McGill philosophy professor Linda Fisher. "I don't think you can decide between them. In a political struggle, a woman can both change her situation as a woman by improving the situation of her society, and change society by improving her situation within it."

Palestinians, Haram agrees, should see national liberation as only one step. "Women must finally address political issues head-front as women, not only as Palestinians."





Let the good times roll!



letter

Frat apologizes for poster

To the Daily

We would like to issue a formal apology on behalf of the members of the Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity for the distribution of the 'Immaculate Consumption' poster around McGill campus on the evening of March 6th. While the date and name of the party advertised by the poster were established at the beginning of the semester, the actual text of the poster and the decision to disseminate it were the results of action by one member of the fraternity acting unilaterally and without consultation with the organization as a whole. Efforts were made immediately to remove the offending posters from public view, though too late to completely avert consternation. We sincerely regret this entire incident. Alpha Delta Phi does not "endorse rape". Like any sane and thoughtful individuals we are sickened by the very thought of rape, and also by the irrational negative stereotypes and disrespect of women that underlies much of the abuse to which women are subjected. That we should have imputed to us a condonation of such vileness is as black a spot as any that could attach itself to our organization. The text of the poster, though apparently intended as liquor related biblical parody, was a gross error in judgement on the part of one individual and we apologize to the Coalition Against Sexual Assault and to any members of the community who took offense to it. From this point forward we shall consult with women's groups before posting advertisements. We can do little else right now other than to ask for suggestions as to how we might further make amends.

John Cape
Mark Piibe
Alpha Delta Phi

HOUSING

AWARENESS DAY
Wednesday, March 14, 1990

THE WORKSHOPS

"Social vs. Private Housing"

Union Building, room 425
3480 McTavish
12:00-1:00 p.m.
(in English)

"Tenants' Rights"

Union Building, room 425
3480 McTavish
3:00-4:00 p.m.
(in English)

"Municipal Politics and Housing"

Union Building, room 425
3480 McTavish
2:00-3:00 p.m.
(in French)

"The Overdale Affair"

Leacock 212
corner Dr. Penfield and McTavish
5:00-6:00 p.m.
(in English)

THE TENANTS' RIGHTS CLINIC

Union Building, room 302
3480 McTavish
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Drop in and discuss
your housing problems
with the Pros!

Staffed by members of
Arnold Bennett's
"Housing Hotline"

THE COMEDY CABARET

RHYTHM ACTIVISM

"UN LOGEMENT POUR UNE CHANSON:
A HOUSING RIGHTS CABARET"

(Bilingual)

The Alley

Union Building
3480 McTavish
4:00-5:00 p.m.

THE PUBLIC FORUM

7:30 p.m. in Rm. 26, Leacock Bldg.
(corner Dr. Penfield & McTavish)

Moderator: Jim Olwell, Executive Director, YMCA- Point St. Charles

Panelists: David Faguy, Community Organizer, Project Genesis
John Gardiner, City of Montreal Executive Committee
Pierre Goyer, Opposition City Councillor, Democratic Coalition
Lisa Jensen, Ex-tenant, Overdale
David Palmer, Student Coordinator, Quebec PIRG Housing Project

PANEL DISCUSSION
(IN ENGLISH)

FOLLOWED BY
OPEN QUESTIONS
(ENGLISH OR
FRENCH)

A GRIP Québec PIRG Event

Dispelling the myth of the matriarchy

Matriarch. The word conjures up images of independent, no-nonsense Amazons. By definition, a matriarchy is a society in which women rule, own and control—hardly possible in our sexist, racist, capitalist culture. Yet the myth of the Black matriarch persists on the screen, in literature and in popular culture. These images are removed from reality.

by Andrea Worrell

In *Myth of Matriarchy* Gloria Naylor, an African-American author, argues that Black culture may be matrifocal, but it is not matriarchal. Naylor terms a single family home headed by a woman 'matrifocal.' For many Black women, a matrifocal home is often an unpleasant reality. As for the matriarchy, Naylor points out few women have control over their lives or anyone else's—especially not Black women.

The matriarchal image stems from a history of racist myths about Black women. We were, and are, called whores, insatiable sexual savages who cum at the gust of a strong breeze. Male slaveowners called female slaves morally depraved to justify using them as sexual toiletbowls. White men placed "their" women on pedestals, and vented misogynist rage on the bodies of our foremothers. No longer were white women tempting white men to sin, Black women were.

Racist perceptions also stuck Black women on the "mammie"

track. The mammie creation was the epitome of a jolly, self-sacrificing slave. An obese, asexual being concerned only with pleasing "massa an' massa chil'in," she posed no threat to the white patriarchy. According to author Bell Hooks in *Ain't I A Woman*, mammie embodied the "ultimate sexist-racist vision of ideal black womanhood—complete submission to the will of whites."

However Black women were not limited to the role of Aunt Jemimas. Those who were not subservient were labelled evil castrating bitches. The inherent evil of Black women allowed white and Black men to justify abuse and allowed chaste white women to assert moral superiority. This Sapphire, this Black bitch from hell, has been blamed for the conditions of Africans in North America.

Black women's endurance in the fields earned them the title of "masculinized creatures." Black women did not resemble their protected, dainty and white counter-

parts. In essence, Black women were strong beasts who didn't feel the pain of childbirth, lacked the ability to love and serve men, and were able to take their masters' beatings.

The myth continues. It has divided Black women and men. The supposedly castrated, unemployed Black man is a result of overbearing, domineering Black woman. We "privileged" women have stolen jobs from Black men both in the workplace and in the home.

The scapegoating of Black women draws attention away from the racist regime which seeks to keep Black men demoralized and unemployed, forcing them into lives

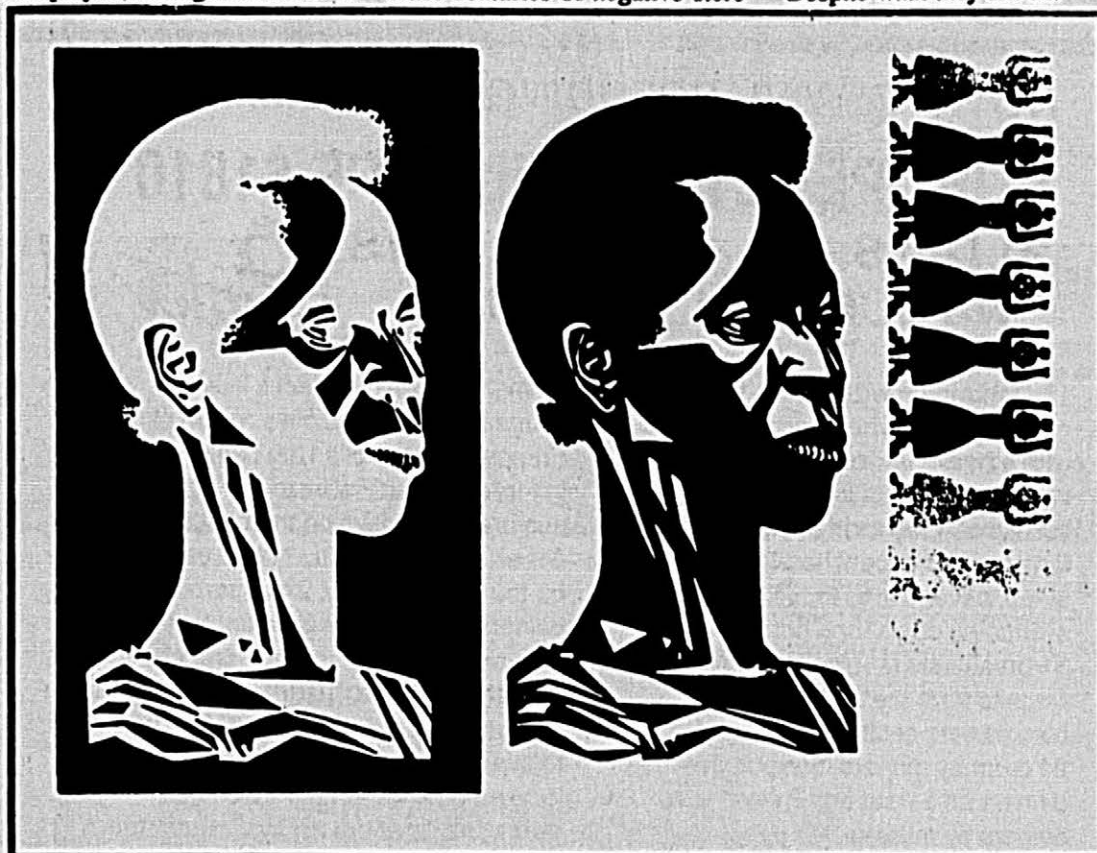
of crime. Black women, oppressed on the basis of colour, gender and class, sit at the bottom of the socioeconomic totem pole.

White people have used the image of the Black matriarch for everything from "selling pancakes to structuring welfare benefits." The myth has also absolved our oppressors of guilt and reduced their responsibility for the present conditions of Black women. Suggesting we are more than human, that we have an inexhaustible supply of strength, is to imply that we can continue to sustain abuse.

Yet some Black women gladly embrace the term. Eager to erase centuries of negative stere-

otyping, many women say they come from a long line of strong women. But this term is used to pacify and placate us. It encourages us to believe in a false sense of power. As Bell Hooks says, women who believe they hold the reins of power will be less inclined to organize and fight against the social structure which oppresses us.

The myth of the Black Matriarch is detrimental to Black women because it projects onto us something that we are not. Our strength, independence and successes have been drawn from years of struggling to survive. We are not superhumans, we are not matriarchs. Despite what they tell us.



their own movement.

Both groups supported reform and aid to the poor but for different reasons. The only attention Western women paid working-class women was through token charitable acts. Charity was the only socially acceptable area in which middle and upper-class women could work outside the home. Many were frustrated because of their exclusion from occupations for which their education and background had prepared them.

However, African-American women were and still are very concerned with the politics of class as well as gender. Tokenism benefits a few, not the masses. Although some African-American women were doing well, the masses of people were still suffering the aftershock of slavery. African-American women understand that we cannot move singly. Although middle-class women were also frustrated by lack of opportunity, they were true to the NACW's motto "Lifting As We Climb" and they helped their sisters. As NACW member Fannie Barrier Williams said "Among white women the club is the onward movement of the already uplifted, while the club movement among coloured women reaches into the sub-social condition of the entire race."

Coupled with class divisions

were racial prejudices that drove the two movements apart. Many Western women are not able to understand the unique situation of African-American women who are doubly blessed since they are of African descent and female. Author Toni Morrison declared that African American women saw European women as "willful children, pretty children, mean children, ugly children, but never as real adults." African-American feminists were aggravated to see such frail women gaining power.

The power of European women resulted from the deterioration of the Black Movement. During the 1920s, divisions within the Black movement surrounding the right to vote created a fragmentation between African-American women and men, as well as women of African and European descent. It was during this period that Western suffragettes began to borrow the terms of the Black movement. Crying "we're niggers, too," Western feminists demanded recognition as oppressed minorities. Yet, when African American feminists asked their European sisters for support in obtaining the vote, the Women's Party told them, "It's a question of race, not sex." Western feminists did not and do not realize the difference that exists between oppression and suppression. To liken

their cause to ours is a bastardization of the "Black Power movement."

The conflict continues

European feminists need to reassess their goals because they are missing the big picture. African-American women are no longer prepared to be tokens in demonstrations or forums. European feminists have a history of claiming sorority at points when it is to their benefit, yet their daily lives show otherwise. Thought should be put into decision making where women of African descent are concerned to avoid making those "well-meaning intentions" seem patronizing.

What has changed today? Not much. European feminists cite that they are in a "privileged position" and because of this try to incorporate us in to their struggle. They do not realize that African women have been fighting for liberation for centuries. They do not realize that we have a voice and are capable of expressing it as our foremothers have done. They do not realize that their "privileged position" makes them exactly what they are fighting against. They do not realize that they cannot truly be believers in women's liberation when they are oppressing women of colour.

Wake up!

Historical divide means no gold for Rainbow

by Anne-Marie Clarke

Women of African descent and those of European background have taken different paths in fighting for women's liberation. The feminist movement is divided as African women on the continent and in the diaspora struggle to free themselves from circumstances their Western counterparts place low on their agenda—if they are mentioned at all. This division has engendered anger and in some cases an unwillingness to work with Western feminists for all their patronizing gestures and limited programs.

The difference is clearly shown in the struggle of two groups in the United States to empower themselves.

In 1917, the United States National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and the General Federation of Women's Clubs were feminist groups. Members of both groups were mainly educated, middle-class women who emphasized education, believed in the importance of the home and the importance of women's moral influence within the family unit.

Yet there were several important differences in the organizations. Whereas European women were able to achieve political and social status through outlets such as charitable organizations, careers and high social status, discrimination against African-American women meant they were limited to

The lesbian loungelizard report

by lydia d. allen

So, the weekend is heading your way and the thought of going to another pot-luck is deeply depressing. What's a dyke to do? Go out and hit the clubs! What clubs? Montréal's lesbian club scene is diverse and constantly changing (if somewhat boring, but more about that later).

Rapid club openings and closings demand the careful attention of the truly hip. At this moment there are five lesbian bars/clubs open, however precariously.

First of all, the bad news... In January, quietly hip Le Boom

closed its doors for good — due to problems with the fire marshal (uh, huh). Rumors of the Boom reopening are just teasers, I fear — a very reputable source informs me that the Boom is indeed a piece of dyke bar history. The appearance of a new mixed bar on Ste Catherine - Alter Ego — could almost have made up for it, but, well, a quick peek around its unsurprising black and chrome insides (no dance floor) will let any dyke know that while it may say "mixte" on the door, Alter Ego clientele is virtually all men with a smattering of dykes (or are they fag hags?)

Anyway, one now finds a large

number of "Boom refugees" at Bilitis (1250 St. Denis, just below Ste Catherine), "the other" happening dance bar for dykes. Just after the Boom closed, one to one-and-a-half-hour line-ups were not uncommon. Luckily for us Bilitis is now two floors and the long lines have dissipated into the smoky sweat, or sweaty smoke, or whatever. It's cheap — on weekends there is a \$1 cover charge and a mandatory \$1 coat check. The music is loud reheated house music with a mixture of mouldy-oldy disco-hits. Hawaii Five-O's theme song signals escape time. (Lounge Lizard Hint: try downstairs, it is often less

crowded with less smoke.) Dismal as it sounds, Bilitis is by far the best cruise/dance bar in town. The rest, as we shall see, are for the most part a pleasantly dull array of "bars" that are really nice, quiet, politically correct coffee houses.

Glou Glou (Ste Catherine near Beaudry metro) is an intimate bar/bistro catering to both female and male clientele, though it attracts women for the most part. It's trendier than Bilitis — wear black — and less relaxed. Glou Glou is small, but it does have a few tables, comfortable couches and a bar. There is also a postage-stamp dance floor and a real live DJ. Music is Bilitis re-runs, but do make requests — they're usually filled. With beer and light meals, Glou Glou is open all day.

offers us one "Ladies Night" a year!!

Note also that while a large majority of the gay male bars strictly forbid the presence of a woman in their sacred dens, all of the dyke bars allow men to enter, with only Bilitis demanding an accompanying woman. Left lacking adequate urban recreation, lesbian sexuality has been reduced to expressing itself in anthologies of "Lesbian erotica" or in the very small contingent of dyke sex mags, i.e. *On Our Backs*. Our one and only lesbian strip bar, Chez Suzanne, hit the dust long ago, (perhaps because, unlike its male counterparts, it was located way out in the East end). What opens in its place? Another cafe/bar!!! (Paradis)

HOW ARE YOU SPENDING THIS SUMMER?

EUROPE \$2126
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18 - 35 Ways of doing it differently!

Two other cafe/bars send their lights out into the nighttimes: L'Exit and Paradis. The first (4282 St. Denis, Mount Royal metro) is reminiscent of a 1920-30s style Parisien café. Dusty rose walls with black tables and chairs and a small bar create a cozy, intimate interior. The muzak is definitely of the background type, a carefully chosen backdrop for dedicated chatterers and gossips. Perfect for an intimate tête à tête or a get-together with friends.

Just-opened Paradis is right below Laurier metro (4670 St. Denis). A combination Shed Cafe and St. Laurent pool hall (one pool table), black and red sets off a long bar that faintly resembles one you might find in an old fashioned malt shop. They serve nachos, sandwiches, etc. and have cable television.

There is one other St. Denis standard, Liliith (3882 St. Denis), the tiniest and least pretentious of the dyke hangouts in Montréal. Liliith caters to an older, mostly butch/femme crowd. The music is do-it-yourself with an amply stocked jukebox full of your favorite '70s songs and a smattering of current Top 40. If you're tired of seeing the same faces, try Liliith, though you can't get away from the same old scene.

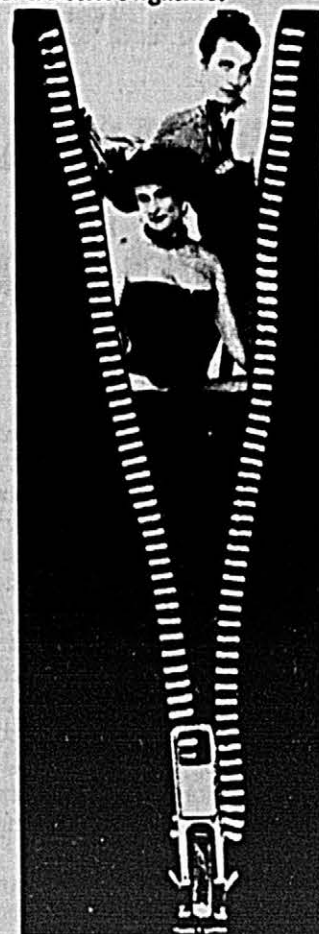
So, does this paltry list of dyke bars seem unduly small, boring, predictable and frustrating? Thought so. I think so too. Three of these five "bars" are glorified cafés! This fits right in with the dominant myth that lesbian equals non-sexual being.

Why is it that the gay male community has hoards of bars, strip clubs and their own sex shop (Priape), while we dykes are left with small, anal-retentive, politically correct "cafe/bars"? Let's also consider the fact that our "brothers" have a less than friendly attitude toward sharing their wealth of nighttime entertainment with us.

Yes, we are graced with one Thursday night a month at Jungle (Note that's "Ladies Night" and not "Dyke Night") and K.O.X., the gay male leather bar of MTL, kindly

As a founding member of P.I.G.G.S. (Politically Incorrect Gay Girl Sluts), I saw over 200 excited, eager, curious dykes, cram into our first sex party (Sex, Cries & Videotape Party, November 1989), smashing the old argument that Lesbians, if offered a female-only leather-bar or strip club, would not support it or be able to keep it open. Since then P.I.G.G.S. has been flooded with requests, inquiries, demands for the date of our next party. Yes, it's true, dykes need sex too!

I think two important tasks lie ahead of us: first, to smash the worn-out idea that Lesbian sex means two women giving each other back rubs while amid incense and candlelight, and second, to create a club life that is as rich as the gay male scene (and as elitist). This second task raises the inherent economic and political discrepancies in power between gay women and gay men, a situation that is indicative of the general status of women (but that is another story entirely!) For now: Dykes Unite for a Better Nightlife!



Gay girl porn subverts slut image

A Woman stands amidst a field of lilies gently fondling her labia minor while reading a soft-cover copy of Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*. Behind her and to her left, another Woman, clad only in flannel brushes strokes on a canvas... the foreground depicts a pastel coloured vulva, the background, the warm and nurturing sea...

THIS IS NOT LESBIAN PORN.

by Tina Girardi

Lesbian porn situates itself in an ambivalent context. Desire is not represented through a realization of "the feminine": love, nurturance, care, and intimacy, rather by appropriating and blurring gender boundaries. Fucking, sex for sex's sake, the intensification of pleasure through sado-masochism, role-play, and female ejaculation are some of the ways in which lesbians explore sexual desire.

But, many feminists think that the use of these representations constitute a re-turn to the patriarchy and simply reproduce "straight" porn.

Lesbians who produce this stuff (not snuff) think not. By manipulating these symbols for female sexual gratification, these women are not passively accepting male sexuality. Instead, they actively explore their own sexualities.

Yet attempts to explore often earn the female-to-female fucker

the label "whore." Her fantasies, what passes her "wet test," come under fire from both mainstream culture and the feminist anti-pornography movement. It is not the "slut" stigma which porn pervs detest, but rather the polarization of feminist circles perpetuated by this labelling.

Lydia D. Allen, a founding father of P.I.G.G.S. (Politically Incorrect Gay Girl Sluts), said the feminist/lesbian community is similar to the very patriarchy which they challenge. "Some feminists, by prescribing sex as being politically useful before it is pleasurable, set up a polarity between the good-girl-feminist and the ignorant-bad-girl-sex-slut. They continue to make men the center of attention by judging a lesbian's activities in terms of a typical male response. They continue the dominant male idea that sex is allogical and therefore trivial and useless."

Luke, another founding father of the same (dis)organization agreed. "By using what traditionally have been male toys for male pleasure, we're illicitly shoplifting or outwardly stealing what has historically been excluded to us. Some feminists can hinder this political larceny by attacking us with the patriarchy's same discursive language. In other words, we have to be good virgins before the feminist cause will marry us."

There is another way to read lesbian porn. One method is to

perceive these female producers of porn not in terms of being either virgins or whores, but in terms of what Pat Califia, the master lesbian libertine of J/O (Jack Off) porn, calls a "macho slut." This supposed contradiction signifies a woman who is beyond the control of our culturally prescribed dualisms, (black/white, nature/culture, male/female.) By introducing a third term, the macho slut can play within a domain where she is always out of reach. To name her means to define, and ultimately control her. Lesbian porn can potentially sub-

vert the patriarchy because it indicates a region which is un-nameable. It is more fitting to describe what lesbian porn does, not what it is. As Susie Sexpert, feature columnist for *On Our Backs*, a lesbian porn mag writes: "We're going to start talking about what we do instead of who we supposedly are. Don't say 'I'm a S/M lesbian' when you could be saying, 'I fantasize eating out my manicurist on the bathroom floor with her mouth gagged by a rubber ball', or 'Fist me until the sweat drips off my lip'. Isn't that much more exciting?"



Porn panel plugs pornography

by Miriam Korn

Panning porn was not the main agenda of a panel and discussion held for Sexual Assault Awareness Week — which both pleased and worried the people who attended.

Shashi Röder, Christine Martin, Eric Léonard and Carolyn Gammon headed the forum, meant to show opposing viewpoints of the pornography issue.

The evening began with an anti-porn film, eventually criticized by each member of the panel.

Gammon, a writer of lesbian erotica, said she once believed that "to be a Feminist is to be anti-porn and to fight it in any way possible, including censorship." She changed her view when a lesbian anthology would not publish her poetry — which she called "mild stuff" — without alterations.

Röder — a family therapist in Canada for the last 13 years and once Deputy Director of a community home for women in England — came to McGill to take a Master's degree to explore her belief that social problems stem from philo-

sophical and theological misconceptions.

Most of the panelists agreed with Röder's comment that "what I see on Ste Catherine Street and in *Playboy* and *Penhouse* makes me want to vomit." But they were all quick to point out the dangers of censorship and the difficulty in distinguishing between erotica and pornography.

Röder, whose "pornographic art" was displayed in the auditorium, explained that one must consider esthetics when examining erotic images, and also be realistic. "Pornography is here to stay, and women should participate in deciding what pornography is in good taste and what is not."

She said "a Kantian disinterested judgement" concerning pornography should be aimed for, as opposed to the present situation which caters to the interests of a few consumers. She added that in order to make an appropriate judgement, one must first understand the mind and body relationship.

Other philosophers agree that arriving at a definition of pornography is definitely problematic. Linda Fischer, who teaches McGill's Philosophy of Feminism course, believes that pornography exists

when erotic impulses or any sort of expression of human sexuality are subverted to an expression of hatred towards women, which may culminate in violence against women.

Fischer noted that saying pornography is undesirable does not necessarily entail support for censorship. "If we ever open the door to censorship, we run the risk of censoring ourselves in other ways."

Martin, a grad student teaching a course in Communications at Concordia, criticized Jesse Helm's amendment to the American National Arts Endowment, which eliminates funding for art deemed pornographic, as an example of government censorship creeping into the art world.

Gammon agreed, "The problem is in giving power to people like Mulroney to determine what is and is not pornography, especially since it will almost undoubtedly result in a decrease in lesbian representation." She cited England's Clause 28, prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality in any way, as an example and called Bill C-54 the Canadian version of the British law.

She added that she was working on a grant from the Canadian Council, which opposes Bill C-54, suggesting that Canada is more pro-

gressive in this area.

Léonard, who is writing his Master's thesis at McGill on "Men and Feminist Discourse on Pornography," also rejected the perspective of many early feminist writers, such as Andrea Dworkin, who argue the very act of sex itself is oppressive to women and pornography is an absolute evil. He feels this view assumes what the reader is thinking, and ignores other possible readings of the images.

"I was first exposed to pornography as a kid, but when I became interested in Feminism, I denied myself of it, although I enjoyed it. Eventually, I was feeling that I was denying a part of myself."

So Léonard went on to explore what it is that creates the power of pornography and why sex itself is so important to so many. He said that it is impossible to eliminate pornography from our culture.

Martin explained that it was important to avoid creating a negative image of all sex, what she coined "anti-sex."

But many say pornography can be dangerous. A representative of Montreal's Sexual Assault Prevention Centre cited its use by assaulters as justification of their actions. "Young children are often shown

these pictures to make them accept what is being done to them. They are told that it's okay, since people who love each other do it."

Some women come into the centre asking for referrals to see a therapist because their husbands or boyfriends have told them they are abnormal since they do not enjoy watching pornography before having sex, she said.

Tina Girardi, the McGill student who organized the forum, was forced to defend her choice of panelists amidst criticism of their views. She said she wanted to present a more empowering viewpoint.

"The feminist movement tends to treat exploring sexuality as diversionary from the cause — as separate from the politics," she said.

She added that the issue divides women. "Women tend to be categorized as good, nurturing and virginal or as bad, which is often associated with being sexy or enjoying different sexual techniques," she said.

This way, the women within the pornography industry are excluded and even frowned upon by the predominantly educated, white, middle class women of the feminist movement which has traditionally condemned all pornography.

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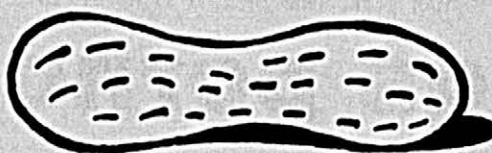
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The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damage due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

341 - APTS., ROOMS, HOUSING

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372 LOST AND FOUND

Found: Leather nap sack - outside Union Building on Friday Night - Can be picked up at Lost and Found in Union.

\$100 reward. Leather aviator jacket (polar bear on sleeve) stolen from car in front of Gert's on McTavish. Friday night March 9th. Info or return (please) contact Veronique 289-9835. Total Anonymity.

Lost: Cheap Apartments. May have been torn down for commercial development, or converted to condos. "Is There A Housing Crisis in Montréal" is the subject of a public forum, Wed., March 14th, 7:30 p.m., Leacock 26. Panelists include city councilors and community representative. Housing Awareness Day - a GRIP - Québec - PIRG event.

374 - PERSONALS

Frosty says...

"Remember, animals are just little people that aren't too bright."



A lovely red box for your complaints and suggestions. McLennan Lobby Mon thru Thru 10:45 p.m. Give us feedback and we'll give you better service. WALK-SAFE NETWORK. McL. Lobby Mon - Thru 10:45 p.m.

AMIGA. Amiga club forming at McGill! Interested? Want info? Leave message for Robert at 731-4369 (before 22:30). Or if you want, send email to 8608094@emf1. Lan. McGill.ca

Engineering BEACH Pubnlite: Friday, March 16, Admission \$3.00 only \$2.00 with shorts and shades. The 40th person to enter wins a bottle of Peach Schnapps. Party features volleyball, beachballs, hot dogs, tropical drinks and coolers, and a beach. Everyone gets a lei.

MCF Dessert to Mania, March 16, 7:00 p.m. Diocesan College, 3473 University. All Welcome! Bring Desert Theme: Evangelism.

He's going, going....Extremely cute, dapper and sincere (but shy) oriental fellow, very early 20's, "McGillite", desires meaningful relationship

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385 NOTICES

Gays and Lesbians of McGill offers an information and counselling talkline. Call us with questions, problems, or just to talk. Phone 398-6822 or drop by Union 417, M-F, 7 - 10 p.m.

Lesbian/Gay studies group meets Thursdays, discussion group meets Fridays, both at Yellow Door (3625 Aylmer) 17h00. Info 597-0363 (Bill).

Vegetarian Festival. March 12 to 16th 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. Student Union Building Room 107/8. Free food samples, information, displays, books, talks and films. For info call META 276-0914.

McGill Drama Festival all this week at Player's Theatre. Seven original one-act plays, screen your entertainment dollar! Call 398-6813 for more info.

Rhythm Activism, Montréal's rebel news orchestra presents "Un Logement Pour Une Chanson", a bilingual comedy cabaret, 4 - 5pm in the Alley on Wed., March 14th. Housing Awareness Day - A GRIP-Québec-PIRG event.

St. Martha's meets every Sunday 10:30 a.m. 3521 University. Throughout Lent: the screening of Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" in 4-5 segments. Bring your lunch. Info: 398-4104, Roberta Clare.

Serenade Chamber Orchestra offers you a concert of Bach, Dvorak, Grieg, Gershwin and Higgins. Sunday, March 18, 7 p.m. Near Longueuil Metro at Regional Champlain College Auditorium 3\$. It'll be worth the trip!

387 VOLUNTEERS

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The Handmaid's Tale

Directed by Volker Schlöndorff
Screenplay by Harold Pinter
Based on the novel by Margaret Atwood

by Karen Valihora

It's been lauded by critics as Big Sister's version of Big Brother, but *The Handmaid's Tale* isn't about the future, it's about the present.

Margaret Atwood's bloody tale of Christian Fundamentalist repression acidly isolates the more vicious tenets of American culture. Despite its macabre futurism, the film unmasks the misogyny of a *Scarlet Letter*/Jerry Falwell tradition of double standards, sex roles and secret shame.

Gilead is a corrupt America "wiped clean" of the symptoms of moral decay — "blacks, homos, and welfare cases." A Reagan-era wet dream, Gilead is the right-wing solution to all its lazy poor, black crack-addicts, and diseased gays.

Capitalism's leftovers are rounded up in brutal scenes resembling holocaust footage. Male terror-police stuff thousands of women and blacks into shiny clean livestock trucks for a trip to The Colonies, toxic waste-lands that serve the same role Siberia does for Russia, Ansar for Israel.

Gilead's foundation is sex-role stratification. Single white women are forced into unidimensional roles as either Handmaids, Aunts, Wives or domestics, according to fertility, marital and economic status. Men — moral enforcers of the new order — are preachers, police, soldiers, guards, officers, killers and television broadcasters.

Bloody Indoctrination

The Family is a sterile institution available only to those who can afford one. Rich, childless couples share the few remaining fertile women — Handmaids — who are kept at the Red Centre, a cross between a nunnery, children's day-care, and a maid placement

Bloody tale is fighting the power



service. At the Centre, fertile "ladies" are the prisoners of infertile and morbidly puritan single women — the Aunts.

Gender treacheress Moira, who escaped from the "looneybin" Red Centre to become a prostitute, tells Kate hooking is preferable to Handmaid hell because, she whispers gleefully, "they don't care who you fuck." Kate risks persecution by striking up an alliance with the Commander's sexy chauffeur, Nick (Aidan Quinn), who comes to her aid by solving the problem of the Commander's infertility.

Red, white and blue are threaded throughout the film by the different classes of women, pristine White for untried Handmaids, harlot Red for those on "duty," and freezing Blue for the Wives. The cold-blooded hypocrisy

of the Wives who snatch other women's babies for their own, and the inimical evil of the Commander, who guiltlessly sends female servants to death with sex, are the twisted human products of a perverse moral order. In this wretched and stunning portrayal of America, the oppressed of both sexes perpetuate their own oppression under the empty authority of "God."

The only disappointment is the (very short) rosy ending, an innovation to Atwood's book, the only part of the blood-washed tale that doesn't ring true.

The joy of bearing "the fruit" and servicing the state with offspring is force-fed the Handmaids, who are terrorized into submission.

Kate (Natasha Richardson), a librarian, is caught trying to escape to Canada with her husband and child. One of the three per cent of women still fertile after decades of nuclear "accidents," pollution and genetic experimentation, she is consigned to the Red Centre for Handmaid indoctrination. Here she befriends Moira (Elizabeth McGovern), seized by the state for practicing "gender treachery" — liking girls. Moira's fertility saves her from exile in The Colonies, but as a lesbian Handmaid, she is branded and can't get a "placement."

At the Red Centre, Handmaids learn a girl raped by six men is a whore, and abortion is sin. A Handmaid is a guilty receptacle, if she doesn't conceive it is her fault — men are exempt from fertility tests. Sex is an offense punishable by death. Offending Handmaids, like one found masturbating, have their feet slashed Christ-style or hands burned, as hands and feet are not necessary to conception.

Kate is placed in the home of The Commander, Fred (Robert Duvall), and renamed "Offred" as his appendage. Kate, a living insult to his barren wife, former gospel singer Serena Joy (Faye Dunaway), is kept to her room in isolation. The Wife, the Commander and the Handmaid only come together during institutionalized rape, a bizarre three-way conception rite repeated until the Handmaid conceives.

Witch burnings

Frustrated by the cold repression of the upper class, the infertile Commander coerces Kate into becoming his mistress/whore. He mercilessly orders her company for Scrabble games and an illicit "date," all the while aware he is leading her to ruin. We learn two Handmaids have already been blamed for both his infertility and sexual advances. For allowing herself to be seduced, a Handmaid is hanged in front of a jeering crowd, her sister Handmaids helping to pull the rope. Aunts and Wives cheer at the spectacle in a ceremony reminiscent of puritan witch burnings.

Media misses mark with debates

by Felisa Shizgal

Since the December murders at l'Université de Montréal, the mainstream media has a new-found interest in the issue of violence against women. But the media's agenda threatens the positive value of this exposure. Nowhere was this more apparent than on two television shows that aired earlier this month.

Forum for debate

On March 5 CBC's *Newsweek* aired "Living with Fear," a program designed to "deal with the causes of violence and with ways to change attitudes to make Montréal a safer community for women." Producers invited an audience of approximately 40 women and men active in women's issues to take part in the forum moderated by Denis Trudeau.

The show was divided into the three parts, one aimed at describing women's fear, the second wondered why men commit violent acts, and the third mentioned solutions.

With such a wide agenda, the show obviously could not adequately address these issues in the space of one hour.

Many said the audience was simply too big, and presented a smorgasbord of conflict rather than any serious food for thought.

Trudeau set the tone in his opening comment: "This is television. No long speeches, make your comments quick." He kept com-

ments flowing but cut speakers off, making in-depth discussion impossible.

The show opened with a video of the life story of Claudette Querouac, a woman who was raped at the age of four, and sexually assaulted at other times throughout her life. The video set the scene for an emphasis on fear and victimization which dominated much of the forum.

Trudeau bounced through the audience gathering anecdotal testimony from women about their insecurity on the streets and in their homes. As one woman said, "If we're not safe on the streets, and we're not safe in our homes, then we're not safe!"

The second segment, male motivation, was predictable. Male participants confessed their own feelings of "impotence" and

frustration. What was not discussed, however, was why men take out frustration on others (usually women).

The broadcast was cut due to a power outage and a five minute highlight from the rest of the event was shown the following night. This segment focused on social barriers such as the advertising industry, legal system, and educational systems which disempower women and deny them their own strength. As participant Freya Kodar said, "We're taught to look in the wrong places for what can hurt us."

McGill Walk-Safe Network co-ordinator Shelley Kreiger, said "within the television

context nothing meaningful could be said. The emphasis on confessionals and personal stories was reductive."

Censorship, Shirley-style

A similar situation occurred in CTV's episode of the "Shirley" talk show which aired Monday as well. The show, according to hostess Shirley Solomon, was "trying to make sense of the Montréal massacre."

The questionable question put before the panelists and audience was whether the massacre was an isolated incident or an example of systematic violence against women.

Panelist Anne McGrath, a member of the National Advisory Board of Women, summed up the sentiments of most participants.

"I'm sick of people asking that question," she said. "Violence against women is not something we have to prove. It's perfectly obvious."

Featuring a busload of largely pro-feminist audience members shipped in from Montréal, and a panelist format rather than a free-for-all, the show seemed promising. But it was dominated by one panel member, a blatantly sexist lawyer who many participants considered a "plant."

Panelist Martin Dufresne, member of Montréal Men Against Sexism, wasn't surprised. "The producers brought in Richard (the lawyer) because argument makes much more interesting television than consensus," he said.

Solomon defended Richard from the

audience's hisses saying, "I don't agree with him either, but we have to give all sides."

Dufresne pointed out that television producers pretend "objectivity" while creating tightly structured and censored programmes.

"The media wants to pretend objectivity exists by making it an equally weighted discussion," said Elizabeth Littlejohn, who co-produces CKUT feminist radio programme Hersay. "But of course they carefully seated and selected audience members to fit their own agenda."

She added that most of the (white) males in the audience were asked to speak, even though they made up a small percentage of audience members.

Even though the producers told the audience it would not be edited, the show was cut.

"When the discussion turned to the ways in which sexism, racism and homophobia interlock, the editor stepped in. The point never made it to screen," said participant Tamsin Douglas.

"Even if women had not been the victims in Montréal, it would still have been a feminist issue," she added. "Violence in any context is a feminist issue."

Participants pointed out that Richard successfully diverted all attention to his own defensive and hostile reactions towards feminists, a typical and dangerous male ploy.

"He was like a little boy throwing a tantrum," said participant Wendy Cairns. "He tried to take his anger and fear out on all of us, which is exactly what Marc Lépine did."